"OVER THE TOP"

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT ☆ ☆

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

EMPEY HEARS THE STORY OF THE TOMMY WHO HAD A BROAD STREAK OF YELLOW.

Synopsis.—Fired by the sinking of the Lusitania, with the loss of American lives, Arthur Guy Empey, an American living in Jersey City, goes to England and enlists as a private in the British army. After a short experience as a recruiting officer in London, he is sent to training quarters in France, where he first hears the sound of big guns and makes the acquaintance of "cooties." After a brief period of training Empey's company is sent into the front-line trenches, where he takes his first turn on the fire step while the bullets whiz overhead. Empey learns, as comrade falls, that death lurks always in the trenches. Chaplain distinguishes himself by rescuing wounded men under hot fire. With pick and shovel Empey has experience as a trench digger in No Man's Land. Exciting experience on listening post detail. Exciting work on observation post duty. Back in rest billets Empey writes and stages a successful play. Once more in the front trenches, Empey goes "over the top" in a successful but costly attack on the German lines. Soon afterwards Empey and his comrades repulse a determined gas attack launched by the Germans. His next experience is as a member of a firing squad which executes a sentence of death.

CHAPTER XXIV—Continued.

—21—

After standing at "attention" for what seemed a week, though in reality it could not have been over five minutes, we heard a low whispering in our rear and footsteps on the stone flagging of the courtyard.

Our officer reappeared and in a low, but firm voice, ordered:

"About—Turn!"

We turned about. In the gray light of dawn, a few yards in front of me, I could make out a brick wall. Against this wall was a dark form with a white square pinned on its breast. We were supposed to aim at this square. To the right of the form I noticed a white spot on the wall. This would be my target.

"Ready! Aim! Fire!"

The dark form sank into a huddled heap. My bullet sped on its way, and hit the whitish spot on the wall; I could see the splinters fly. Some one else had received the rifle containing the blank cartridge, but my mind was at ease, there was no blood of a Tommy on my hands.

"Order—Arms! About—Turn! Pile—Arms! Stand—Clear."

The stacks were re-formed.

"Quick — March! Right — Wheel!" And we left the scene of execution behind us.

It was now daylight. After marching about five minutes, we were dismissed with the following instructions from the officer in command:

"Return, alone, to your respective companies, and remember, no talking about this affair, or else it will go hard with the guilty ones."

We needed no urging to get away. I did not recognize any of the men on the firing squad; even the officer was a stranger to me.

The victim's relations and friends in Blighty will never know that he was executed; they will be under the impression that he died doing his bit for king and country.

In the public casualty lists his name will appear under the caption "Accidentally Killed," or "Died."

The day after the execution I received orders to report back to the line, and to keep a still tongue in my head.

Executions are a part of the day's work, but the part we hated most of all, I think—certainly the saddest. The British war department is thought by many people to be composed of rigid regulations all wound around with red tape. But it has a heart, and one of the evidences of this is the considerate way in which an execution is concealed and reported to the relative of the unfortunate man. They never know the truth. He is listed in the bulletins as among the "accidentally killed."

In the last ten years I have several times read stories in magazines of cowards changing, in a charge, to heroes. I used to laugh at it. It seemed easy for story-writers, but I said, "Men aren't made that way." But over in France I learned once that the streak of yellow can turn all white. I picked up the story, bit by bit, from the captain of the company, the sentries who guarded the poor fellow, as well as from my own observations. At first I did not realize the whole of his story, but after a week of investigation it stood out as clear in my mind as the mountains of my native West in the spring sunshine. It impressed me so much that I wrote it all down in rest billets on scraps of odd paper. The incidents are, as I say, every bit true; the feelings of the man are true—I know from all I underwent in the fighting over in France.

We will call him Albert Lloyd. That wasn't his name, but it will do:

Albert Lloyd was what the world terms a coward.

In London they called him a slacker.

His country had been at war nearly eighteen months, and still he was not in khaki.

He had no good reason for not enlisting, being alone in the world, having been educated in an orphan asylum, and there being no one dependent upon him for support. He had no good position to lose, and there was no sweetheart to tell him with her lips to go, while her eyes pleaded for him to stay.

Every time he saw a recruiting sergeant he'd slink around the corner out of sight, with a terrible fear gnawing at his heart. When passing the big recruiting posters, and on his way to business and back he passed many, he would pull down his cap and look the other way from that awful finger pointing at him, under the caption, "Your King and Country Need You;" or the boring eyes of Kitchener, which burned into his very soul, causing him to shudder.

Then the Zeppelin raids—during them, he used to crouch in a corner of his boarding-house cellar, whimpering like a whipped puppy and calling upon the Lord to protect him.

Even his landlady despised him, although she had to admit that he was "good pay."

He very seldom read the papers, but one momentous morning the landlady put the morning paper at his place before he came down to breakfast. Taking his seat he read the flaring headline, "Conscription Bill Passed," and nearly fainted. Excusing himself, he stumbled upstairs to his bedroom, with the horror of it gnawing into his vitals.

Having saved up a few pounds, he decided not to leave the house, and to sham sickness, so he stayed in his room and had the landlady serve his meals there.

Every time there was a knock at the door he trembled all over, imagining it was a policeman who had come to take him away to the army.

One morning his fears were realized. Sure enough, there stood a policeman with the fatal paper. Taking it in his trembling hand he read that he, Albert Lloyd, was ordered to report himself to the nearest recruiting station for physical examination. He reported immediately, because he was afraid to disobey.

The doctor looked with approval upon Lloyd's six feet of physical perfection, and thought what a fine guardsman he would make, but examined his heart twice before he passed him as "physically fit;" it was beating so fast.

From the recruiting depot Lloyd was taken, with many others, in charge of a sergeant, to the training depot at Aldershot, where he was given an outfit of khaki, and drew his other equipment. He made a fine-looking soldier, except for the slight shrinking in his shoulders and the hunted look in his eyes.

At the training depot it does not take long to find out a man's character, and Lloyd was promptly dubbed "windy." In the English army "windy" means cowardly.

The smallest recruit in the barracks looked on him with contempt, and was not slow to show it in many ways.

Lloyd was a good soldier, learned quickly, obeyed every order promptly, never groused at the hardest fatigues. He was afraid to. He lived in deadly fear of the officers and "noncoms" over him. They also despised him.

One morning about three months after his enlistment Lloyd's company was paraded, and the names picked out for the next draft to France were read. When his name was called, he did not step out smartly, two paces to the front, and answer cheerfully, "Here, sir," as the others did. He just fainted in the ranks and was carried to barracks amid the sneers of the rest.

That night was an agony of misery to him. He could not sleep. Just cried and whimpered in his bunk, because on the morrow the draft was to sail for France, where he would see death on all sides, and perhaps be killed himself. On the steamer, crossing the channel, he would have jumped overboard to escape, but was afraid of drowning.

Arriving in France, he and the rest were huddled into cattle cars. On the side of each appeared in white letters, "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8." After hours of bumping over the uneven French roadbeds they arrived at the training base of Rouen.

At this place they were put through a week's rigid training in trench warfare. On the morning of the eighth day they paraded at ten o'clock, and were inspected and passed by General H——, then were marched to the quartermaster's, to draw their gas helmets and trench equipment.

At four in the afternoon they were again hustled into cattle cars. This time the journey lasted two days. They disembarked at the town of Frevent and could hear a distant dull booming. With knees shaking, Lloyd asked the sergeant what the noise was, and nearly dropped when the sergeant replied in a somewhat bored tone:

"Oh, them's the guns up the line. We'll be up there in a couple o' days or so. Don't worry, my laddie, you'll see more of 'em than you want before you get 'ome to Blighty again, that is, if you're lucky enough to get back. Now lend a hand there unloadin' them cars, and quit that everlastin' shakin', I believe yer scared." The last with a contemptuous sneer.

They marched ten kilos, full pack, to a little dilapidated village, and the sound of the guns grew louder, constantly louder.

The village was full of soldiers who turned out to inspect the new draft, the men who were shortly to be their mates in the trenches, for they were going "up the line" on the morrow, to "take over" their certain sector of trenches.

The draft was paraded in front of battalion headquarters and the men were assigned to companies.

Lloyd was the only man assigned to D company. Perhaps the officer in charge of the draft had something to do with it, for he called Lloyd aside and said:

"Lloyd, you are going to a new company. No one knows you. Your bed will be as you make it, so for God's sake, brace up and be a man. I think you have the stuff in you, my boy, so good-by and the best of luck to you."

The next day the battalion took over their part of the trenches. It happened to be a very quiet day. The artillery behind the lines was still, except for an occasional shell sent over to let the Germans know the gunners were not asleep.

In the darkness, in single file, the company slowly wended their way down the communication trench to the front line. No one noticed Lloyd's white and drawn face.

After they had relieved the company in the trenches, Lloyd, with two of the old company men, was put on guard in one of the traverses. Not a shot was fired from the German lines, and no one paid any attention to him crouched on the firing step.

On the first time in, a new recruit is not required to stand with his head "over the top." He only "sits it out," while the older men keep watch.

At about ten o'clock, all of a sudden, he thought hell had broken loose, and crouched and shivered up against the parapet. Shells started bursting, as he imagined, right in their trench, when in fact they were landing about a hundred yards in rear of them, in the second lines.

One of the older men on guard, turning to his mate, said:

"There goes Fritz with those d——d trench mortars again. It's about time our artillery 'taped' them, and sent over a few. Well, I'll be d——d, where's that blighter of a draft man gone to? There's his rifle leaning against the parapet. He must have legged it. Just keep your eye peeled, Dick, while I report it to the sergeant. I wonder if the fool knows he can be shot for such tricks as leavin' his post?"

Lloyd had gone. When the trench mortars opened up, a maddening terror seized him and he wanted to run, to get away from that horrible din, anywhere to safety. So quietly sneaking around the traverse, he came to the entrance of a communication trench, and ran madly and blindly down it, running into traverses, stumbling into muddy holes, and falling full length over trench grids.

Groping blindly, with his arms stretched out in front of him, he at last came out of the trench into the village, or what used to be a village, before the German artillery razed it.

Mixed with his fear, he had a peculiar sort of cunning, which whispered to him to avoid all sentries, because if they saw him he would be sent back to that awful destruction in the front line, and perhaps be killed or maimed. The thought made him shudder, the cold sweat coming out in beads on his face.

Empey learns that a streak of yellow sometimes can turn all white. He tells the unusual story in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LIQUIDATES DEBT TO FRANCE

In Sending Prune Trees to Devastated Country, California Is Repaying an Obligation.

California is generously sending a million and a half two-year-old prune trees to help in restoring the French orchards, and enough seed beans to plant 60,000 acres. Canada is undertaking the planting of thousands of Canadian maples in France. It is pleasant also to know that there is to be no lack of outside help for the devastated towns, observes Christian Science Monitor, in stating these facts. English and American architects are at work on plans for new buildings to replace those razed by the guns, both in Belgium and in France.

The Indianapolis News sees sentiment in the prune tree transaction. It says: "These trees are expected to convert 15,000 acres into bearing orchards in two years. It was France which, in 1856, gave to California her first prune trees. The prune, which since then has filled many a gap on the table of the American boarding houses, and has borne the brunt of many a jest, keeps right on proving its worth."

Best Material for Splints.

Galvanized wire netting is claimed to be much superior to wood as a material for surgical splints. It is strong, light in weight, non-absorbent and easily sterilized, and, unlike wood and plaster, gives free ventilation. The new splints are woven from wire so tempered that it can easily be pressed into shape to be bound closely upon the injured limb.

Not Improbable.

"Are you friendly with the policeman on your block?"

"Oh, we speak cordially enough," said the citizen of a "dry" town, "but I was carrying home a box of 'shoes' the other day and dropped it on the pavement. The package began to leak and ever since then I've had an idea that he regards me with suspicion."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

President's Power Supreme.

In time of war the president of the United States is commander in chief of the army and navy. The members of his cabinet are responsible to him personally, not to congress. None of them may be removed without his consent, except by impeachment.

Party Frocks For Youthful

The debutante and her youthful friends are entitled to a few of the keen joys of life, even in war times. With sweethearts overseas, or in training camps, and days filled with war work and letter writing, she certainly earns the heart-healing joy that is to be gathered from a new party frock. And the party frock is easier to make at the home than other frocks, excepting, of course, house dresses; it is for this reason not an extravagance in war times.

A very pretty model is illustrated here of a frock that ought to inspire any girl with a desire to make it for herself. Crepe georgette, plain and printed, a little taffeta silk and a bit of embroidery in silk make up its analysis so far as materials are concerned. All the sewing, including the long-stitch embroidery, is simple enough. There is an underslip of thin silk to begin with, with a baby waist which takes the place of a corset cover. The skirt of the frock is of plain crepe georgette hanging straight from a gathered waistline, and the low-necked bodice is of taffeta, silk embroidered in motifs at each side. It slips over a chemisette of lace with a collar at the back that disappears under the bodice—a very new and pleasing feature that adds to the becomingness and appropriateness of the frock.

An overskirt of wide lace falls to the hem of the crepe skirt and is partially covered with an overdrape of lovely printed crepe georgette. It will be noticed that the skirt is quite long and the neck only moderately low. If there is one thing more than another that returning conquering heroes will admire in the American girls they are prepared to adore it will be a pretty modesty in dress. They will come back prepared to make comparisons. They are already convinced that the Americans are the prettiest and sweetest girls in the world and the girls must see to it that they don't change their minds.

Four Hats, Simple and Smart

These hats are distinctly youthful in design—the breezy young American is written in their smart lines and simple construction. Most of the hats of this character are made of silk or satin—satin is, in fact, in the ascendent—but they may be made of other fabrics, as broadcloth, duvetyn, velvet, and occasionally fur fabrics, or other of the soft and very pliable materials which are used in coats and frocks. For the young woman at school a more appropriate little group could hardly be assembled than the four models shown above.

At the top a sprightly small hat is made of satin. It has a soft crown and narrow brim plaited and turned up at the front. Two strands of those colored wooden beads that milliners have so often found a place for on this season's hats are festooned across the front.

The tam in all sorts of interpretations, from the most casual to the most dignified of styles, appears in millinery for both maid and matron. At the left a tam made of navy blue taffeta reminds one of the flat hats of the navy. It has a corded band about the head and many girls can wear this shape becomingly. At the right a silk hat has a fine plaited frill about the face and plaited ribbon—pulled out so that only the marks of the plaits are left—is tied about the base of the crown. Hats like these are made in colors to match suits and frocks, or in blacks. Very dark brown and black hold commanding positions in youthful millinery, and these hats are expected to do much service.

The remaining hat is a dressier bit of girlish headwear. Its underbrim is faced with shirred crepe georgette, and loops of ribbon cover the smooth fabric on the upper brim, which might be either satin or velvet. Having gone to the extravagance of looped ribbons and shirrings, this hat conserves in the matter of trimming and makes a silk ornament and tassel a faultless finish.

Julia Bottomley

Friendship.

The basis and groundwork of friendship is the forgetting of self through that sympathy which must always exist between friends.

Pile Fabrics Favored.

Black and dark-colored chiffon velvets are reported by New York factory representatives to be among the most popular weaves of the various pile fabrics for fall which have been selling steadily and consistently since the early part of the summer. Dress manufacturers are said to have placed some very liberal recorders for this weave where it could be found in the desired colorings. Retailers from many parts of the country have also been seeking further supplies of chiffon velvets, together with but slightly less liberal qualities of velveteens, velours, and some corduroys. It would appear that the volume of business for the season is to depend entirely on the rate of production which the mills are able to maintain.

The Cry for Peace.

Knicker—What is the question with Germany?

Bocker—Whether she has experienced a change of heart or only a change of lungs.

TAKE CHOICE OF ANY NEW STYLES

New York.—Well, we are settled as far as the fashions go. The designers have done their work; now arises the time for us to do our work. The public insists, writes a fashion critic, that it has the harder job, or at least that is the conclusion one reaches after hearing the discussions of countless women for and against the purchase of a single garment.

It is not easy to buy clothes in war time, when the slogan of judicious spending echoes and re-echoes from every point of the compass. Even poverty has rarely impressed upon us with such drastic emphasis the need to spend wisely and well.

Apparel is not the only branch of industry that demands judgment and caution in spending. We have somersaulted from a nation of extravagant individuals to one of thrift and shrewdness.

Skirt Struggle Is Ended.

It is probable that America has won out in the length of the skirt. The short French garment did not go. It is worn by war workers as part of their uniforms, but the great majority of women accept the desire of the American designers to launch an ankle-length skirt.

Those who have been criticized for exploiting this design at a time when the conservation of wool is necessary insist that they can cut such a skirt out of less material than the short, during one which has been the fashion. An extremely narrow, short skirt has proved to be an impossibility because of the manner in which it rides above the knees when one is seated.

There is an immense amount of velveteen, also soft velours, velvet and heavy satin. One does not have to use wool in order to have a warm or fashionable gown or suit. Velveteen has been accepted as a fabric for the commonest kind of usage, and it serves in the early morning for a coat suit with a waistcoat blouse of angora wool or heavily-embroidered jersey.

There are homespuns and various types of mannish materials of which the tailors seem to have sufficient to make all the suits demanded; but there is no denying that both jackets and skirts are longer than they have been for several seasons since the summer of the war.

The foremost designers of jackets play all sorts of tricks upon the hem, cutting it to points like a jester's costume, and blocking it out in battlements as if it were a medieval tower.

One well-known dressmaker accentuates this jester effect in frocks as well as jackets. He cuts long panels at the sides which hang from hip to hem of skirt; he places long panels on the sleeves that leave the arm at the elbow and drop to the knees, and he cuts the bodice into a panel at the middle of the back, letting it drop below the knees. All of these panels end in sharp points. They are not placed simultaneously on one suit or frock, but are used in various methods over the majority of street clothes.

On the left, medieval gray gown trimmed with squirrel and silver net studded with rhinestones. The cuirass blouse, as shown in this gown, is considered one of the best features of formal evening frocks. On the right, a dinner gown of taupe-colored velvet, with skirt and short train cut in one piece. It has long, tight sleeves, in the medieval manner. The waistline and the square decolletage are edged with ostrich tips dyed to match the belt.

New Fastenings on Jackets.

No woman who is interested in the subject of her coat suit, which is the usual first choice of the autumn, should be ignorant of the diagonal fastening which has leaped into fame as a substitute for the conventional opening down the front.

A great many tailors, some of whom are among the best in this country, do not cater to this novelty, but the women like it. One guesses that its inspiration was in the Sam Browne belt, and women believe that the bias line across the bust is an attractive one. Buttons are sometimes used down this line, and often it is braided or run with tiny strands of tarnished gold braid, if the material is velvet or velveteen.

SCREEN FOR A SEWING ROOM

Convenience for Home Not Large Enough to Permit of Room for the Special Purpose.

A convenient piece of furniture for the sewing room is a sewing screen. If the house is not large enough to permit of setting aside one room for this a sewing screen is a still greater convenience.

It is well to have a carpenter make the frame, though anyone handy with tools would find it no great task. A three-ply screen is a convenient size and it should be low, so that all its contents may be within easy reach of activity, who sits in a low chair to sew.

The screen may be covered with cretonne to match the hangings in one's room if desired. It will then seem to take less space in a small apartment, as it will fall in line with other furnishings.

Tack this cover on securely with small brass-headed tacks. Then make over so many pockets of various sizes and fasten them securely. They will hold thread and many small needed articles. Larger pockets will be useful for holding pieces of work. The pockets, of course, should be cut larger than the space which they are to cover and be either gathered or plaited on.

It is a good scheme to use a narrow elastic as a running string for the tops.

It gives a tidier appearance, especially when the pockets are well filled, thus may hang such articles as needle book, scissors, wax and emery on long ribbons from tacks on the framework.

A few brass hooks will be found useful for hanging up shears and other things one does not wish to attach to ribbons. The sewing screen should be light, but broadly built enough so it will stand firm.

It may be moved about at will, and as the pockets are all on one side it may when not in use be set with that side out of sight, to present a neat appearance, no matter how full of work the pockets may be.

A dainty handkerchief has one corner cut off and remade by a triangle of white net on which is one's monogram.

FASHION HINTS

Wings have a tendency to be placed at the back of a hat.

Boots will measure eight inches from the breast of the heel.

New and smart for any umbrella is a gold crook handle.

Millinery colorings are dull and one-tone effects are favored.

Embroidering is much used, especially in geometrical designs.

Stitching of silk or wool makes a very attractive trimming.

On voile, lawn or organdie, cut-out eyelet work is very good.

A beautiful cape is of cerise wool, jersey lined with gray silk.

Organdie and brushed wool form one of the oddest combinations.

Very little jewelry should be worn, but pearls are still permissible.

One may have either short or full skirts or long and narrow ones.

Large black hats for afternoon have facings of blue or brown.

Some of the most novel buttons are covered with Japanese embroidery.

Lemon or mauve-colored georgette is used for a luxurious sleeping suit.

Lines of the most fashionable frocks have reached the last word of simplicity.

A smart little fall hat may be made with a cloth crown of deep blue, a narrow brim of buff and over all a sprinkling of buff velvet flowers.

Amber Blouses.

Flesh pink chiffon and georgette blouses are being worn so universally that women of exclusive taste have turned to another tint, and that tint seems to be amber—not yellow and not tan, but the indescribable golden shade produced by sunlight shining through clear amber. A simple tucked batiste blouse becomes touched by the magic wand of amber, an exclusive model worth several dollars. Amber chiffon blouses cost still more, and amber organdie trimmed with filet lace is exceedingly distinguished in price.

Some of the new coats show broad collars like capes and sometimes these collars are of the same material as the coat. Sometimes fur is used in combination.